

U.S. Patent Application No.: 10/616,399
Amendment dated August 6, 2004
Reply to Office Action of May 7, 2003

PATENT

Attorney Docket No.: 713-23-CIP

Amendments to the Specification:

Please replace paragraph [0029] with the following rewritten paragraph:

[0029] In this specific embodiment, at least one central tendon assembly 134, comprising at least two concentric tubular tendon elements 136 (Figures 6A, 6B), secures the buoyancy apparatus 106 to the seabed. As shown in Figure 1, the tendon assembly 134 is attached at its upper end to the center of the well deck 130, and it extends down along the centerline of the buoyancy apparatus ~~[[126]] 106~~ to a tendon foundation in the seabed. The tendon foundation is of conventional design, described more fully below, comprising a caisson pile 138 anchored in the seabed, and a connective sleeve 140 connecting the tendon assembly 134 to the caisson pile 138. The advantage of using a central tendon assembly 134 is that it can be designed (in terms of the physical characteristics of the tendons the tendon foundation) to withstand most of the tension load, thereby reducing the tension loads in the risers 126. Thus, the requirement for reinforced foundations for the wellhead 132 will be further reduced, which is particularly advantageous in ultra deep water where the tension requirement can be quite critical.

Please replace paragraph [0032] with the following rewritten paragraph:

[0032] Figure 2 shows another exemplary embodiment of the invention used in a spar type floating platform 200, which includes risers ~~[[226]] 126~~ that are uncoupled from a tendon assembly 234. This embodiment provides a simplified riser and tendon construction (no need of riser spacers or guides), but the risers ~~[[226]] 126~~ and the tendon assembly 234 will have to be sufficiently spaced and will have to be tensioned sufficiently to avoid any collision between the risers ~~[[226]] 126~~ themselves and between the risers ~~[[226]] 126~~ and the tendon assembly 234. Accordingly, this embodiment requires a center well 204 that must be larger than that of the embodiment of Figure 1.